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STATE ALSO PASS TO USAID  
USAID/W FOR A/AID ANDREW NATSIOS, JBRAUSE  
DCHA/OFDA GGOTTLLIEB, MMARX, RTHAYER, BDEEMER  
AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA  
SOUTH ASIA RESPONSE MANAGEMENT TEAM  
SOUTH ASIA EARTHQUAKE TASK FORCE  
DCHA/FFP FOR JONATHAN DWORKEN  
ANE DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR MARK WARD  
BANGKOK FOR OFDA SENIOR REGIONAL ADVISOR TOM DOLAN  
KATHMANDU FOR OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR WILLIAM BERGER  
ROME PASS FODAG  
GENEVA FOR RMA AND NKYLOH  
NSC FOR JMELINE  
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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN - EARTHQUAKE: USAID/DART BOLSTERS SHELTER  
WINTERIZATION EFFORTS

REF: Islamabad 16345

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SUMMARY  
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1. The rapid onset of the Himalayan winter has brought greater urgency to efforts to winterize shelters of earthquake-affected populations. Agencies are stepping up efforts to ensure that families receive adequate winterization materials and tools, including blankets and plastic sheeting to reinforce non-winterized tents. The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) is strongly advocating for shelter needs to receive higher priority through the Shelter Cluster mechanism-an interagency working group chaired by IOM comprised of GOP officials, UN representatives, NGOs, and donors. The USAID/DART is also working closely with the US Embassy and Departments of State and Defense to reinforce this message with GOP officials. Further, USAID is airlifting an additional 6,000 sheets of tarpaulin and 2,500 blankets that can be used to insulate the walls and floors of tents or shelters. In coordination with the Shelter Cluster, the USAID/DART is also exploring other winterization options in order to rapidly address immediate shelter needs. End Summary.

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Coordinating the Race for Thermal Protection  
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2. The USAID/DART Shelter and Settlements Advisor (SSA) reports that there has not been a significant increase in the population requiring shelter assistance as estimated soon after the earthquake of October 8, 2005. What has changed, however, is the worsening of conditions due to the onset of the Himalayan winter. As a result, winterization of current shelters has become increasingly urgent.

3. At present, the number of people requiring shelter assistance remains imprecise, with agencies using a range of planning figures. Per reftel, the USAID/DART estimates that 400,000 households or 2.8 million people have shelter needs as a result of the earthquake. The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) planning figure for a worst-case scenario is 3.2 million homeless.

4. The number of remaining shelter needs is also ambiguous. According to the GOP's Federal Relief Commission (FRC), shelter needs have largely been met, particularly for residents at the 5,000 feet elevation, above which people are particularly at risk due to extreme cold and lack of access during the winter months. IOM staff in Islamabad also reported that 100 percent of people still living above 5,000 feet will have received shelter assistance by December 10.

5. (Comment: These assertions of 100 percent shelter coverage are widely disputed by USAID/DART field staff, NGOs, and IOM staff in the field, all of whom argue that the level of shelter assistance achieved thus far falls far short of 100 percent. At a December 8 Cluster Meeting, NGOs even disagreed with an estimate that 80 percent of shelter needs had been met, indicating that the coverage was even lower in areas where they were working. In its latest draft of the winterization strategy, IOM reduced the 100 percent

estimate to 90 percent and, in light of the discussion at the December 8 meeting, may reduce it even further. In addition, IOM clarified that the 100 percent figure refers to the actual distribution of shelter materials. However, residents may not have used the materials for shelter construction.

16. Comment continued: Local commanders responsible for populations in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) are taking two approaches to meeting shelter needs. In AJK, there is a strategy to shelter people in place, outside of camps, whereas in NWFP, the GOP has encouraged camp settlements. The disconnect in how to best address shelter needs stems in part from the fact that initially the GOP position on shelter was to encourage all affected populations to migrate to camps and in part from the fact that AJK has relatively few sites suitable for camps and NWFP has many. End comment.)

#### ----- Shifting Priorities -----

17. In light of rapidly approaching winter conditions when access to populations requiring shelter assistance will be restricted, the percentage of shelter materials presently carried by helicopters should receive higher priority. One reason for urgency is that shelters cannot be built once snow is on the ground.

18. Due to concerted efforts by donors, the UN World Food Program (WFP), and the GOP, the food supply in high altitude areas is generally considered within the humanitarian community to be adequate, with a healthy pipeline of food though the winter. In addition, there is locally-produced food available from this year's harvest.

19. As a result, USAID/DART field staff and NGO partners report that at present, shelter is the primary concern of affected populations remaining in or near their homes. The GOP and WFP recently redistributed geographic responsibilities to manage the effective distribution of food commodities, with WFP covering the most difficult areas to access. As of December 1, WFP began to move its operations from main population centers to Allai, Kaghan, Neelum, Lipa and other high elevation valleys. These areas are unlikely to be served by the market because of snowfall, landslides, or the fact that normal harvest and trading patterns were interrupted by the effects of the earthquake. Further, the USAID/DART Food for Peace Officer is currently in Mansehra to assess food needs and explore options for food relief at a later date should the situation change and pockets of needs emerge.

#### ----- Delays in Transportation of Shelter Supplies -----

10. One reason for delays in the delivery of shelter materials is the inexperience of some NGOs with logistical operations. For example, the UN Joint Logistics Center (UNJLC) has cited cases of improperly packaged shelter materials and instances when NGOs have not followed established channels to request air support from UNJLC. As a result, at times helicopters have been ready to pick up NGO shelter commodities but could not transport them as scheduled.

11. Further complicating the timely provision of shelter assistance are some GOP restrictions on the importation of commodities, which have caused long sourcing and procurement delays. For example, corrugated galvanized iron (CGI) sheets, manufactured in India but purchased in Dubai, have been stalled in customs for nearly three weeks. To date, waivers appear to have been granted on case-by-case basis, and the humanitarian community has requested a blanket waiver from the FRC to facilitate relief efforts. There is some speculation that delays are due to market protection issues; however, this has not been confirmed. In an effort to take immediate corrective action, the USAID/DART is pursuing the possibility of establishing a joint commodity warehouse, likely in tandem with the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), where commodities would be collectively warehoused and made available to the humanitarian community as needed.

#### ----- USG Efforts Regarding Urgency of Shelter Needs -----

12. At this time, the USAID/DART's strategy reflects an emphasis on expedited shelter relief to the high altitude affected region. It is anticipated this will be the case for the next several weeks, with the main objective being to meet critical shelter requirements while there is access to these elevations and needs persist. The bulk of relief

commodities transported during this time will consist of CGI sheets, plastic sheeting and blankets. Based on recommendations from USAID/DART's SSA, further commodities for shelter kits, such as nails, screws, rope and sand bags, are being considered. A "Special Standards Task Force" was also established as of December 4 at the Forward Operating Base in Muzaffarabad to ensure quality control and consistency in shelter supplies. In addition to the attention to high elevation areas, the USAID/DART will be closely tracking shelter requirements below 5,000 feet, especially in organized and spontaneous camps and congested urban settings. In this regard the USAID/DART strategy entails diligent oversight of humanitarian relief in the areas of health, and water and sanitation needs.

13. With the situation becoming more critical, the USAID/DART has undertaken the following actions in recent days to raise awareness regarding the urgency of shelter needs:

14. Encouraged agencies to take immediate action to transport a greater percentage of shelter materials to affected areas, and to increase emphasis on meeting shelter needs. The priority should be providing more emphasis on shelter needs, rather than discussion leading to consensus on what percentage of shelter needs remained to be met.

15. Advocated with the FRC to prioritize the immediate shelter needs of affected populations, especially located in hard to reach areas above 5,000 feet. With the deadline for intervention December 15 to 20, the USAID/DART advocated a shift to shelter rather than continued emphasis on food. With food largely available in Mansehra and Muzaffarabad, according to USAID/DART field assessments, and the fact that food aid can be transported after winter sets in; the provision of shelter assistance to those without should be prioritized.

16. Refocused dialogue at Shelter Cluster meetings at the Islamabad and field levels in Mansehra and Muzaffarabad to ensure that shelter needs receive appropriate attention. USAID/DART staff reported a continued disconnect between the field staff and the agencies in Islamabad.

17. Engaged multi-agency efforts, including DOD, UNJLC, and WFP to ensure that movements of shelter commodities are most effectively transported. On December 9, DOD Disaster Assistance Center (DAC) staff attended an NGO meeting to provide training and guidance on the proper procedures for requesting air support and the appropriate packaging and off-loading of relief materials.

18. The USAID/DART is in discussions with DFID, regarding joint support of a commodities warehouse with resource materials purchased locally or within the region for NGOs to access easily, compared to the current bureaucratic system that is subject to significant delays.

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Assistance Efforts to Date  
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19. USAID: In support of the overall shelter strategy, USAID has provided 66,500 sheets of tarpaulin, 45,000 blankets, 1,570 winterized tents, and 455 tents since the beginning of the emergency. In addition, USAID funded eight NGO partners to provide shelter assistance to approximately 75,500 households. As agencies step up winterization efforts, USAID is airlifting an additional 6,000 sheets of tarpaulin and 2,500 blankets that can be used to insulate the walls and floors of tents or shelters. In addition, the USAID/DART is conducting field assessments to gauge the capacity of implementing partners to scale up current operations in light of winterization needs.

20. DOD: Through the Joint Operations Center (JOC), the US military is working with the UNJLC and the GOP Military to develop a "smart pull" or requirements based strategy to appropriately distribute relief supplies. Instead of instituting a set percentage of the type of commodities that are delivered across the board, the shipments are determined by the end point receivers to "pull" the most-needed commodities to the field. In addition, as of December 7, DOD had provided 4,602 tents, 250 rolls of plastic sheeting, 232,092 blankets, and 600 heaters. Additionally, DOD provided air support to transport shelter commodities.

21. Multi-agency efforts: The Shelter Cluster is coordinating the multi-agency winterization and shelter efforts. On December 5, the Shelter Cluster reported that approximately 35,000 self-help shelter kits have been distributed and the GOP military has built an estimated 40,000 transitional shelters. In addition, the international humanitarian community and the GOP military have distributed more than 612,562 tents and more than 4.1 million blankets. By December 10, the Shelter Cluster

estimates that agencies will have distributed 174,000 sheets  
of CGI.

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